

# Winter Driving Concerns on the National Forest

Veteran travelers on the National Forest often say that getting there is half the fun. If you plan to do any winter driving, however, getting there may be half the battle.

## Winter driving brings its own challenges

Winter is a great season for vacations, offering wonderful opportunities for romantic weekend getaways, downhill and cross-country skiing, and visiting friends and relatives during the holidays. But winter travel can quickly become a winter nightmare if you aren't prepared for the extra challenges of winter driving. **Remember, many places away from a city do not have cell phone coverage and calling for help may not be an option.**

Winter weather can make road conditions unpredictable, and sometimes treacherous. Even in southern locations, where winters are usually mild, unusual freezing temperatures or unexpected snow and ice may bring winter driving surprises that can ruin a winter vacation.

Before you hit the road for a winter vacation, take time to prepare yourself and your vehicle for winter driving. Here are a few winter driving tips, with links to expanded resources, to help make your winter vacation safe and successful:

### [Winterize Your Vehicle](#)

The first step for safe winter driving is getting your car, truck or recreational vehicle ready for winter driving and winter road conditions. Simple things like these can make winter driving safer:

- Check tire pressure
- Inspect all belts and hoses
- Make sure the battery is fully charged
- Change the oil, switching to a thinner grade of engine oil for better performance in colder temperatures
- Inspect the wipers and wiper fluid to ensure better visibility

### [Driving in Snow](#)

Before setting out on your winter driving adventure, whether you're headed to the ski slopes, to visit a friend or the store, review and rehearse the proven techniques for winter driving in snow and other winter road conditions:

- Drive more slowly
- Brake *before* you turn a corner.
- If you go into a skid, turn your wheels *into the skid* and accelerate slightly to regain control of your vehicle. This does not seem intuitive, so it may help to practice in an empty parking lot or a deserted road before you experience this in traffic.

## **[Pack an Emergency Road Kit and Learn How to Handle Common Emergencies](#)**

If something does go wrong on your winter driving trip, you'll want to have what you need to handle any situation, from a flat tire to an overheated engine. Start by packing winter driving basics, such as emergency flares, extra oil and antifreeze, blankets and drinking water, and a cell phone so that you can call for assistance. Then click the link above for a [complete list of emergency supplies and some brief tutorials](#) on common roadside emergencies.

### **How to cope with roadside emergencies**

Learning how to handle common roadside emergencies will make winter driving less stressful and more fun:

#### **[Learn How to Install Tire Chains](#)**

If you do much winter driving, there's a good chance you'll have to install tire chains sooner or later. Start by choosing chains that are easy to install, then practice putting them on and taking them off a few times in your driveway. Crouching in the dark, on the edge of a snowy highway, is no way to try installing tire chains for the first time.

#### **[Learn How to Change a Flat Tire](#)**

Flat tires are never fun and they're always inconvenient, but flat tires are easy to fix if you have the right tools and you know what to do. Make sure your spare tire is properly inflated and in good repair, and be sure you have a full set of tools, including a good jack that you know how to operate and a lug wrench that will get the job done. Many cars now have locking lug nuts, a security feature that can confound a stranded motorist who doesn't know where to find the special tool that opens the lock. Review your owner's manual *in advance* to be sure you're familiar with the way your vehicle works, and then check out these [step-by-step instructions](#) and a special how-to video.

#### **[Learn How to Jump Start a Car](#)**

One of the most common winter driving problems is a battery that has lost power and is no longer able to start your car. If that happens, you'll need a good set of jumper cables and good Samaritan to lend a hand. These [step-by-step instructions](#) will teach you everything you need to know.

### **Drive Carefully**

Now that you reviewed all of the winter driving tips and techniques presented here, you're ready to explore a winter wonderland of travel and recreation. Drive carefully and pay attention to other drivers; not everyone is as well-prepared for winter driving as you are.

More on Winter Safety:

- [Quick Tips For Off Road Riding In Snow](#)
- [Driving in Rain](#)
- [Winter Safety Checklist for Family, Home, Car & Pets](#)

#### Winter Safety

- [Winter Safety Checklists for Family, Home, Car & Pets](#)
- [Winter Heath Hazards and Cold Temperature Information for Pets](#)

#### Related Articles

- [Winter Car Safety and Maintenance - Maintain Your Car in the Winter Video](#)
- [Winter Driving Advice - Tires and Brakes for Safe Winter Driving](#)
- [Winter Survival - Survival in Winter - Winter Survival Tips](#)

(Modified from an article: By [Sharon O'Brien](#), About.com Guide)